TRU TeamWorks

August 11, 2009

WIPP Quick Facts
(As of 8-10-09)

7,653
Shipments received since opening
(7,393 CH and 260 RH)

61,696
Cubic meters of waste disposed
(61,575 CH and 121 RH)

118,203
Containers disposed in the underground
(117,950 CH and 253 RH)

Foreign Travel Notice:

Please advise by COB August 18, 2009, if you or anyone if your office is planning on going on Foreign Travel for the first half of FY2010 (October 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010), please provide all of the information requested below to...

Purpose and Benefit of Travel
Dates of Travel
Estimated Cost of Travel
Country (-ies)
Traveler's Name
Contractor or DOE Employee

New DSA Implemented

The new Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) will provide WIPP workers with a clear, organized path to promoting safety and ensuring compliance. The implementation of the new document, which went into effect June 24, was the product of a 27-month revision process by a team of WIPP experts working to improve the prior DSA document.

DSAs are required at all DOE nuclear facilities. The documents within it describe the facility, its operation and analyze postulated accident scenarios posed by natural or manmade hazards using a dose modeling code. WIPP's old DSA needed a revamp due to other changes that have taken place in the process over the past ten years. The expert team's job, in preparing the new DSA, was to develop safety procedures and controls to eliminate or limit identified hazards.

File Photo

A radiological control technician checks the RH-72B cask before the waste handling process. The RH safety basis document went through changes under the new DSA implementation.

Site Operations & Disposal Manager Wes Bryan said that implementing the new DSA was fundamental in reinforcing a cultural change toward disciplined operations for the facility. He also said employees have been trained to understand and effectively put the new DSA to work and will continue to receive training and experiences to reinforce their understanding.

"We want to promote discipline and rigor as the foundation for implementation of important documents such as the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit and the Technical Safety Requirements," Bryan said. "We provided training to the workforce for all levels of the WTS organization to ensure familiarity and knowledge of the new DSA."

Two major components that govern WIPP operations are the Technical Safety Requirements (TSR) and Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP). In order for WIPP to continue operations, the facility must comply with the regulations set forth by these two documents, which caused some issues under the old DSA because both

The Eddy County DWI Program needs volunteers for its math and science tutoring program

The Eddy County DWI Program is committed to helping our young students remain in school and excel in their studies. They have started a program that will tutor students from P.R. Leyva and Alta Vista Middle Schools to help prevent young students from using alcohol and other drugs. This pilot program will include 6 to 8 students from both schools who have shown interest in math and science.

The program needs volunteers who work in the math and science fields, and hold a math, science, or computer science degree in order to tutor the students for one hour every other Tuesday starting September 29 and continuing through the 2009 – 2010 school year. Tutoring will be done at the Carlsbad Public Library from 6:00. to 7:00 P.M.

For those interested, please contact Debbie Hofer at 575-302-3017 or at hoferd@cavemen.net.

documents focus on two different topics.

Under the new DSA, the facility can better comply with these regulations because the HWFP and TSR control sets are now separated, allowing them to stand alone on Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations and nuclear safety regulations, respectively. Though separated, implementation of the HWFP and TSR control sets each involve the same high level of rigor and discipline to ensure compliance.

The new DSA also took the existing remote-handled (RH) and contact-handled (CH) documents under the safety basis and combined them together to form one document. Because it was unknown when RH shipments were to be received, there was only a safety basis document regarding CH waste in the older DSA. Once RH shipments began, an RH safety basis document was implemented, which caused some issue because both documents contained different technical safety requirements that had to be considered. Combining the two safety basis documents has made it easier to comprehend and comply with the site nuclear safety requirements.

Nuclear Safety Manager James McCormick said one of the more challenging changes to the DSA was use of a different dose modeling code (DMC). The DMC is a computer software used to analyze worst case scenarios to assist in the selection of safety-related systems or administrative controls to minimize the risk to both facility workers and the general public. Safety-related controls are items, such as the waste handling building, which are selected, analyzed and credited at some level within the safety analyses to provide a desired level of protection to the worker, public and environment in the event of an emergency situation.

The magnitude of the DSA re-write was such that it addressed control set changes for waste handling, maintenance and facility operations. Successful implementation of the new document will strengthen WIPP's commitment toward discipline, rigor, compliance and continuous improvement.

TRANSCOM looks to expand its system

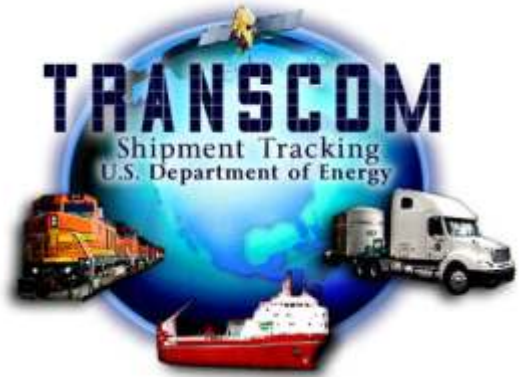
It's a match made in heaven – and then beamed down to Earth via satellite.

The National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Global Threat Reduction Initiative (NA-21, also known as GTRI) is looking for ways to better meet its mission of reducing and protecting vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials located worldwide, including during transportation.

Enter the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) and its highly successful Transportation Tracking and Communication System (TRANSCOM). "As part of the NNSA mission for nuclear nonproliferation, the office of Global Threat Reduction and CBFO will be partnering to expand the capability of the TRANSCOM monitoring system," said Steve Casey, TRANSCOM Program Manager for CBFO.

At WIPP, TRANSCOM is used to track shipments of TRU waste around the clock and to maintain communication with drivers. Both capabilities are essential to maintaining security of vulnerable cargo. TRANSCOM uses onboard satellite Global Positioning Systems to track shipments as they make their way along the nation's highways. Shipment icons are displayed on computer-generated maps that identify the vehicle's location within a few hundred feet. Federal, state and tribal officials with access to a database can then monitor shipments from their computers.

attention of NNSA, which conducted a feasibility study to see what tracking system might be best for its own shipments. TRANSCOM, with its 24 hour staffing and already-existing status with the DOE, was deemed the best fit.



"The other (tracking systems) don't do all that TRANSCOM does," Casey said, noting that the partnership is now in the "proving phase."

"It's (TRANSCOM) widely recognized across the United States and has a long history of tracking shipments," said Paul Singley, a project manager involved with GTRI transportation security efforts with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). "It has a well-accepted infrastructure that we're hoping to be able to enhance."

TRANSCOM officials also see the development as a positive.

"It's exciting to see the project grow," said Sharon Taylor, TRANSCOM project manager. "The contracting team of Ma-Chis and NetGain will continue to support DOE management in expanding TRANSCOM's role in the transportation security area."

As a first step, TRANSCOM will soon monitor shipments made by GTRI's Off-site Source Recovery Project (OSRP), which removes excess, unwanted or orphan radioactive sealed sources that pose a risk to health, safety and national security. To date, GTRI has already been able to recover more than 20,000 of such sources nationwide.

Soon, such recoveries will be monitored by TRANSCOM.
"We did a pilot program with GTRI/OSRP back in the fall where we used TRANSCOM," said Singley. "We've gone through the pilot phase. We're starting to roll out in earnest."

The average of about four GTRI/OSRP "recoveries" a month will account for a very small percentage of TRANSCOM's monitoring efforts, Casey noted. WIPP, for comparison, accounts for over 80% of the shipments in a month. What the GTRI/OSRP project will do is help TRANSCOM get better adjusted to working with the NNSA.

"Ultimately, we're looking at this for a whole set of isotopes outside of the transuranic sphere," Singley said.

The second phase of the expansion involves enhancing the monitoring parameters for the TRANSCOM system. GTRI is supporting the expansion of TRANSCOM's already extensive security capabilities and, Casey said, hopes to have some of the innovations ready for demonstration by September. Multiple new security features will then be tested for remote-real time monitoring.

"We're assisting with a list of specific security options," Casey said. "NNSA is interested in more than just tracking the truck's movement, but would like to monitor the physical security conditions of cargo and the safety of the drivers."

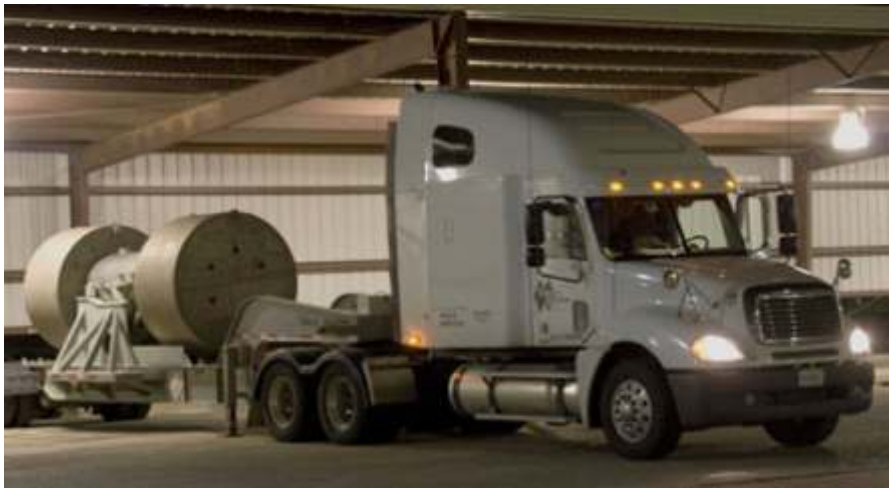
Finally, a longer term study will take a look into what information system is best for tracking the transport of commercial sources of radioactive materials.

“Although TRANSCOM may be used as a pilot, the current system is defined for government use only,” Casey said. “The ultimate goal is to get TRANSCOM to the point where they could go commercial.” This would make the same security capabilities available to commercial shippers of radioactive materials therefore supporting GTRI’s mission.

“That’s the hope,” agreed Singley. “We’ve had some very specific interest expressed by some commercial shippers in being able to better track their shipments.”
Such commercial development is down the road, and Singley said, all upcoming changes will be very gradual.

“Right now, we’re going to look at the ease of development and modification of the TRANSCOM system, along with the acceptance of all the players,” he said.

Initial LANL to WIPP RH-TRU waste shipping Campaign Complete



Sixteen RH waste canisters, packaged nearly two decades ago have now been safely disposed at WIPP. The WIPP Central Characterization Program had worked nearly two years to obtain approval for the waste stream to be shipped to WIPP. The final shipment from the first campaign was received on July 2.

NOVA Science Now airs special on WIPP

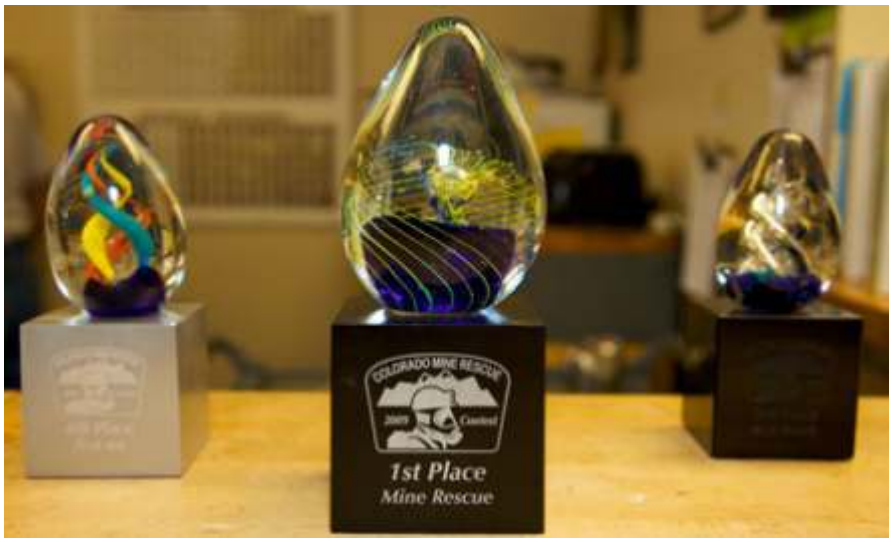
If you missed the NOVA Science Now special on WIPP called Secrets in Salt, you can still catch it on the PBS Web site, or by clicking this link.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow/0405/02.html

WIPP Mine Rescue Team Excels in Colorado Regional Competition

The WIPP Silver Mine Rescue Team returned home from their recent competition with a little more luggage than they brought to the trip. The WIPP team successfully competed in the Western Regional Mine Rescue competition which was held in Idaho Springs, Colo. on July 22 and 23.

Eleven mine rescue teams were in attendance from Missouri, Wyoming, Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico. The competition was sponsored by the Colorado School of Mines and administered by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).



WIPP Mine Rescue Team members have their Colorado Mine Rescue Competition awards on display in the lamp room.

WIPP Mine Rescue Trainer Buddy Webb said these contests are held to help develop rescue procedures and methods used by all teams in actual rescues and ensure readiness in the event of an actual disaster.

The competition consisted of four different categories, the field competition, the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) competition, the gas detection instrument contest and a first aid competition. The WIPP team took first place in the field competition and placed second in the overall competition.

The WIPP team had two members place in the top four of the bench competition. This individual competition focuses on the expertise of the "benchman", the person who assembles and troubleshoots the SCBA. WIPP's Hank Miller and Curtis Sanders finished second and fourth, respectively, in the competition.

"Doing well and excelling validates our training," Webb said. "It shows that our mine rescue team is prepared should we have to respond to a real emergency. Competition is good but being there for our fellow miners is the main reason we do this."

Idaho Springs is located about 20 miles west of Golden, Colo. in the Rocky Mountains. An old gold mine, called the Edgar Mine, was utilized as the training facility for the mine rescue teams.

Recovery Act Funding Improving Road Conditions at WIPP

The U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office has started its first major project in Eddy County using Recovery Act funding at the WIPP.

The project, reconstruction of the South Access Road leading to the WIPP facility, is one that has been scheduled and planned many times. The Recovery Act funding has now allowed the project to move from the planning to the design and construction phase. The narrow two-lane road has deteriorated and is need of repair.

While not currently used by actual WIPP shipments, the road is heavily used by employees and vendors accessing the site. Additionally, this new road could be proposed as another route to WIPP, contingent upon completion of U.S. Highway 128 and negotiations with the state. The new road will be constructed to New Mexico Department of Transportation standards, with shoulders and a wider right of way.

Currently, the survey work has begun, with an in-process geotechnical investigation to follow. Actual construction work is expected to begin late this year.

Multiple local and federal agencies worked together to make the project possible. The road is currently owned and maintained by Eddy County. In an effort to reduce the continuing maintenance burden on the county, CBFO inquired about transferring ownership of the road to DOE. Additionally, CBFO has required that access from the south to the WIPP site be maintained throughout the entire construction process.

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The bid process is expected to begin in October 2009.

To date, CBFO has generated or saved approximately 100 jobs associated with the WIPP project Recovery Act funds.

Back to school, back to flu?

Summer is winding down, which of course means kids will be heading back to school. As most parents know from first-hand experience, back to school means a surge in sniffles and other contagious diseases. Most parents are so familiar with this cycle, that we don't pay much attention to it. However, this year may be different.

Novel (A) H1N1 influenza, which made headlines last April, has not disappeared, and stands ready to make a real impact on school children and their families this fall.

This flu occurs most frequently and has more complications in young people. While symptoms are usually fairly mild and most people recover completely without medical intervention, there have been serious complications reported in some instances. There is great concern that this fall's H1N1 flu may become more virulent. School children represent one of the major sources of a community disease spreading because of their close proximity and poor sanitary habits. Infected children take the illness home to siblings who take it to day care centers, and family members, who take it to work. Once school starts, an infection's spread through the community can be very rapid.

As a parent, what can you do to help reduce the chain of infection?

- Talk to your school and find out what their infection mitigation plan is. All school systems should have a pandemic plan in place by now , and they should be able to show it to you.
- If your child is sick, keep them at home. Make sure you have solid plans in place for child care if your child is sick and cannot return to school.
- Make sure you have adequate stocks of supplies and medications for flu like symptoms at home now, including children's medications.
- Teach your children proper hand washing and respiratory hygiene. If the school does not supply sanitizer and tissues, make sure your child has them readily available at all times.

For more information on the Novel (A) H1N1 flu, go to www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu website, or call Health Services at x8997.

Submitted by Anita Self